



For Immediate Release

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***MINER ACT IS IMPROVING MINE SAFETY, SAVING LIVES; ENZI
HAILS AGGRESSIVE ACTION BY MSHA TO IMPLEMENT LAW***

Washington, D.C. – At the one-year anniversary of President's signing the "MINER Act" into law, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today said the act and the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) continue to improve mine safety across the country and change the way the mining industry operates.

"Mining presents unique safety challenges," Enzi said. "The problems are complex, the solutions varied, and the risk of unintended consequence is substantial. The MINER Act, which was signed into law one year ago, has been successful in addressing these challenges to improve mine safety and save lives."

"In the MINER Act, (the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act) we placed an emphasis on developing practical and individual approaches that will better protect miners immediately. We also established standards that can evolve with technology, and to encourage the development of better miner-protecting technologies so that this industry will not be allowed to fall behind progress. Such approaches should continue through the regulatory process," Enzi added.

Since the passage of the MINER Act, some 86,000 new self-contained self-rescue units have been placed into service, and more than 100,000 are scheduled to be added in the next few months. In addition, all of the nation's 55,000 underground coal miners have and will continue to receive comprehensive training in the use of these life-saving devices.

Under the law, government and the private sector have built stronger partnerships to develop and implement new safety and communication technology. All underground coal mines have been required to submit emergency response plans and have submitted plans to provide miners that are entrapped with sufficient quantities of breathable air. Mines have installed lifelines and other escape assistance. Some 36 new mine rescue teams have been established already, with more to come.

Enzi made particular note of new results recently reported by MSHA, which include:

- Issuing an emergency temporary standard (ETS) - seven months before the deadline set by Congress - to increase the strength of seals in underground coal mines;
- Requiring directional lifelines in all primary and alternate escape routes out of a mine;
- Mandating additional safety training and expectations training on the use of self-contained self-rescuers at underground coal mines;
- Requiring redundant underground to surface communications systems in underground coal mines;
- Requiring all underground coal mines to submit emergency response plans that include, among other things, post-accident breathable air for trapped miners;

In January 2006, Enzi met with the families of the 12 miners killed in the January 2, 2006 explosion at Sago Mine. After returning, Enzi wrote bipartisan legislation to improve mine safety regulations and reduce safety risks for miners across the country.

The result, the “MINER Act of 2006,” received overwhelming support in both the House and the Senate.

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